

I ask the departments and agencies to provide an initial report on the results of the review to the Vice President through the National Performance Review within 90 days of the date of this memorandum.

The information gained from this review will be combined with information gathered through the Vice President's "Father to Father" initiative and other father involvement programs to determine the direction of those programs for the future. The National Performance Review, together with the Domestic Policy Council, will recommend further action based on the results of this review.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on a Bipartisan Commission on Political Reform

June 16, 1995

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I was delighted when you and I agreed to the suggestion of a citizen in New Hampshire that we create a bipartisan commission to address the issues of political reform. As you stated at the time, this proposal offers the best chance in a generation to break through the stalemate between the parties that has blocked progress for reform. As you know, the citizen stated that this commission should be modeled after the base closing commission; I agree. This is an idea with wide appeal: in addition to our agreement, this proposal has previously been endorsed by Senate Majority Leader Dole, and a similar proposal has been introduced by Representatives Maloney, Meehan, Johnson, and others. I am writing to set forth my views on the best way to write into legislation the agreement we reached in New Hampshire.

As you know, to succeed, such a panel must be distinguished and truly bipartisan; it must have a firm deadline for action; and it must have a mechanism for presenting its proposals to the President and the Congress in such a way that we will be forced to act on them in a timely and comprehensive manner. Several times in recent years, particu-

larly thorny issues, including base closings and congressional and judicial pay, have been addressed in this fashion.

First, the commission should be bipartisan in nature. Under this model, it would be comprised of eight members, appointed by the President in consultation with the leaders of the Congress. The President would make two appointments; two would be made in consultation with the Speaker of the House; two would be made in consultation with the Majority Leader of the Senate; one each would be made in consultation with the minority leaders of the House and Senate. No more than four commissioners could be members of any one political party. To ensure that the commissioners are independent, receive the trust of the people, and can take a fresh look at these issues, they should not be current Federal officials or Members of Congress, or officers of or counsel to the political parties. In this fashion, we have an opportunity to achieve consensus and balance that will produce a national consensus on reform.

Second, the commission should be given a firm deadline in which to act—by February 1, 1996. These issues, while difficult, are not new, and can be fruitfully addressed in that time. The American people want to know that we will act during this Congress, and I believe the best chance of that is before the electoral season begins in the summer of 1996. The commission would be charged with considering all the issues of political reform, including campaign finance reform and lobby reform. Let me be clear: I do not believe that this proposal for establishing a commission should deter or detract from the previously scheduled Senate action on political reform (S. 101), a measure I strongly support. That would be contrary to the purpose of the entire enterprise—making progress on reforms that are stalled, not to delay action on measure that are moving forward. If the Congress has taken final action on any of these matters before the commission meets, the panel could choose not to address them altogether.

Third, its recommendations must be dealt with in an expedited and comprehensive manner, in the same fashion as the proposals of the base closing commission. They would

be sent to the President, who would reject them or send them on to the Congress in their entirety. They should then be considered on the “fast track”—an up or down vote, with no amendments, within 30 days of the submission by the President. Only in this way can the American people be assured that narrow interests do not pick apart the coherent and comprehensive recommendations of the bipartisan commission. (As you know, the recommendations of the base closing commission take effect unless they are rejected by the Congress, but in this instance I believe it is more appropriate to give the Congress the opportunity to vote up or down.)

Working together to follow up on our New Hampshire agreement, we have a rare opportunity for truly bipartisan cooperation on a matter of urgent concern to the American people. We have a chance to put aside partisan interests to work toward the national interest. I look forward to working with you toward this end, and to hearing your views on this proposal or others you might have for moving ahead, and I have directed my staff to meet with your staff on this matter. If we take these steps, we will set in motion a process that could truly transform American politics for the better.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks on the Unveiling of a Group of Seven Commemorative Plaque in Halifax

June 17, 1995

Ladies and gentlemen, I just wanted to say a few words—I’m sure I speak on behalf of all of us here—to thank the people of Halifax and Nova Scotia and the leaders for making us feel so welcome, and to say a special word of appreciation for the leadership Prime Minister Chrétien has given to this conference. The people of Canada can be very, very proud of the direction and leadership that he gave this G-7 conference. It has been more businesslike, more informal, and more specific in its suggestions for what we can

do to improve the lives of our people than many of our previous meetings. And I think it is due to the leadership of the Prime Minister. And all of us wanted to express that to the people of Canada. We are very, very grateful for it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. at the Halifax Waterfront. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President’s Radio Address

June 17, 1995

Good morning. I’m speaking to you from Halifax, Canada, where I’ve been meeting with the leaders of the world’s largest industrial democracies. We’ve taken concrete steps to strengthen the world economy. We’ve agreed on measures to anticipate and prevent future financial crises, like the one that happened earlier this year in Mexico, and to promote economic growth in countries that will provide markets of tomorrow for our American exports.

The work we’re doing here is part of my administration’s strategy to create jobs and raise incomes and living standards for the American people. Our responsibility is to restore the American dream, to give our children the chance that we’ve had to make America work well for all people who work hard.

To do that, one of the things we have to do is to reduce the deficit and balance the budget. Earlier this week, I outlined my plan to balance the budget in 10 years. This plan proves we can balance the budget while we continue to invest in the things that will keep America strong, things like education, health care, medical research, and technology. My plan will keep our economy strong as we eliminate the deficit. And unlike other plans, my plan protects the people in our country who have so much to give and who have given so much.

For example, my plan would avoid a number of cuts proposed by the Congress that would seriously hurt hundreds of thousands of American veterans. The House budget plan has proposed quadrupling the amount veterans pay for the prescription drugs they